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AUTHOR Valencia, Richard R.
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the literature on the impact of school closures on students and communities in the context of four policy issues: school size, cost savings, educational equity, and public support for education. In closure decisions, a major hypothesis affecting school board members is that larger schools can offer a broader curriculum at lower costs than smaller schools; therefore, bigger is better. Research suggests, however, that student participation decreases with increasing institutional size, and that a school should be sufficiently small to need all its students for its enterprises. Although driven by a desire for cost savings, most school closings realize only slight savings because 75-80% of a school budget is for personnel costs, which are only slightly affected by closings. Not only are there meager data to support the closure-savings argument, most consolidated districts are unable to document the amount of money saved. The available data suggest that more than half of the districts that calculated actual cost savings experienced no savings or additional costs. School closings produced by retrenchment policy-making often result in clear winners and losers. Investigations of school closings in five major cities indicate that schools with primarily low socioeconomic status and minority students have suffered the brunt, if not the exclusive burden, of closings. Such decisions exacerbate the already difficult conditions that high-risk minority students face. School closings also have social costs: reduced parent involvement in their children's education, flight to private schools, and decreased public support for educational bonds and levies. This report contains 40 references. (SV)

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Policy Paper No. 84-C3

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND POLICY ISSUES

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October 1984

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Richard R. Valencia

October 1984

Richard R. Valencia is an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of California at Santa Cruz. He was Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow (National Research Council) at the Stanford Center for Chicano Research during 1983-84.

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Abstract

The impact of school closures is explored in the context of four policy issues: school size, cost savings, educational equity, and public support for education. A review of existing research draws the conclusion that there is little support for the effectiveness of school closings. The paper raises questions about the wisdom of school closures when considering the four policy issues. It is concluded that school officials need to be more concerned with developing strategies to finance the educational mission of the school district, not whether, or even how, to close schools.

Introduction

Two decades ago education in the United States was being hailed as the new growth industry. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, declining enrollments caught the schools by surprise.[1] A decline in the birthrate and an aging population meant fewer students enrolled in public schools. Adverse economic conditions (e.g., rising inflation) and a mounting societal dissatisfaction with levels of student achievement in the schools resulted in an erosion of public support and a diminished willingness to invest in education, particularly in a period of decline.[2] At the same time, competition between educational interest groups (e.g., bilingual education; special education) garnered the support of some politicians in passing legislation, resulting in "mandates without money."[3] The resulting factionalism created enormous pressures for school districts throughout the country to deal head on with the problems and conflicts of managing school systems with declining enrollments.[4] School administrators and school boards implemented numerous types of fiscal belt-tightening strategies to accommodate the decline in resources brought about by shrinking enrollments and exacerbated by growing inflation. One particular cost-saving measure that school districts used with some frequency because it was believed to make common and fiscal sense to do so was the closure of underutilized schools. It has been estimated that in the 1970s over 7,000 schools, affecting about 80% of the nation's school districts, were closed.[5]

In the last one and a half decades a voluminous and expanding literature on school closures has developed.[6] The bulk of these studies, however, is

largely prescriptive.[7] That is, these investigations mainly deal with the advice and technical aspects of retrenchment (e.g., how to consolidate programs; how to decide the criteria for closures). Very few studies are concerned with the policy implications of closures on students and the community. The purpose of this paper is to examine the implications of school closures according to four criteria: (a) School closures increase enrollments in the remaining schools. Is bigger necessarily better? (b) School closures are purported to be cost-beneficial. Do closures actually result in substantial cost savings? (c) School closures--by their very nature--are burdensome and raise issues of equity. Are closures in multi-ethnic communities "color blind"? Are closures in socioeconomically diverse communities equitable? (d) School closures are contentious technical and political processes. Do closures tend to erode public support for education?

Before the analysis gets underway, two caveats are in order. First, the issues are exceedingly complex. A major thesis of this paper is that school closures--in terms of causes and effects--are not simple phenomena. Thus, no simple, unequivocal answers should be expected. Second, the state-of-the-art on school closures with respect to policy implications and the overall impact on communities is in a nascent stage. As one researcher observes:

> Until the literature on declining enrollment and consolidation breaks away from either cookbooks giving recipes to administrators on how to avoid the lash of community anger or research on the technology of projections, little more about political impact will be uncovered.[8]

In light of this, the present analysis will rely on some occasional hypothesizing and intellectual risk-taking.

School Size Issue

One immediate outcome of school closures is that students go from schools of lower enrollment to consolidated schools of higher enrollment. The resultant consolidation means the receiving schools increase in size.[9] Therefore, it is clear that the issue of size and its relation to education expenditures and student outcomes (e.g., achievement) has significant bearing on policy decisions in an era of retrenchment. In closure decisions, a major hypothesis operative in the minds of school board members and other policy makers is that larger schools are in better positions to offer a broader curriculum with more courses at lower costs compared to smaller schools. Often, this conjecture has led to the conclusion that a major solution to the problem of rising costs is to increase school size.[10] On what basis is the perceived relation between larger schools and increased school effectiveness made? Lindsay's (1982) answer to this is revealing:

> . . . the paths followed by educational policy during the last half century with respect to school size have been guided more by intuition than science. The dominant assumption has been that the larger the school, the more economical, specialized, comprehensive, and effective it must be. In short, bigger is better. (p. 57)[11]

When one looks to the available literature on the relation between school size and student outcome, however, intuition takes a back seat. In a classic study two decades ago, Barker and Gump (1964) examined the relations between school size, school setting (extracurricular and classroom), and student participation and satisfaction in 13 Kansas high schools ranging in size from 18 to 2,287 students. The major finding, which supported previous research, was a negative relation between institutional size and quantity and quality of student participation. In a recent study, Lindsay (1982) replicated several of

Barker and Gump's findings with a representative sample of students at the national level (National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972; Levinsohn et al., 1978). Lindsay's study is significant because the observed relation between school size and student participation still held when socioeconomic status and academic ability were controlled.

Although the empirical evidence is by no means conclusive, there are numerous other studies indicating the cognitive and affective advantage of smaller over larger schools and studies demystifying the alleged superiority of larger schools.[12]

If the evidence leans toward the conclusion that small schools are better than large ones, is there an optimal size? There are no hard findings on this issue. However, there are some opinions by scholars who have worked in this area. Levin (1983) proposes that there is no educational argument for elementary schools being larger than 300-350 students and for secondary schools containing more than 300-400 students. "As a rule of thumb. . .," Levin (1983) notes, schools are probably too big ". . . if the principal and teachers do not know most of the students" (p. 2). In one of the most comprehensive studies of schooling in the United States, Goodlad (1984) argues there are no defensible reasons for operating elementary schools with more than 300 students or secondary schools with more than 500-600 students. Contending that we need further, sustained research on the school size issue, Goodlad (1984) posits: "The burden of proof . . . is on large size" (p. 310). On the question of optimal size, Barker and Gump's (1964) advice is:

> The educational process is a subtle and delicate one about which we know little, but it surely thrives on participation, enthusiasm, and responsibility. Our findings and our theory posit a negative relationship between school size and individual student participation. What seems to happen is that as schools get larger and settings inev-

Is there empirical evidence on how much is saved by school closures? Not only is there meager data to support the closure-savings argument, but most districts that have closed schools simply are unable to document the amount of money saved.[18] For example, Seattle has closed a number of schools over a 10-year period. Yet, citizens charged that school administrators could still not report how much money was saved by the closure of a single school.[19] In an extensive study of school closures in 49 school districts throughout the country, Andrews (1974) collected survey data on both estimated and actual cost savings after closures of elementary schools. Of the 49 districts, 35 had projected savings before closures. Of these, only 12 districts calculated the actual cost savings subsequent to the closings. Andrews reports that 4 of the 12 districts reported cost savings (the savings ranged from a low of $2,000 to $60,000 and the estimated savings were less than initially projected). On the other hand, 50% of the districts (n=6) calculated that no money had been saved. Finally, two districts reported that the closings had actually cost money. In short, 8 of the 12 districts concluded that the school closures resulted in no savings or additional costs.

It should be noted, however, that there are likely to be instances where cost savings resulting from closures are substantial. For example, it would appear that in some cases building maintenance and energy costs in underenrolled schools are so enormous (e.g., Northeast, East) that consolidation would be in order. But, closures such as these do not seem to be the rule.

In conclusion, although there is little solid data on the cost benefit issue of school closures, one can infer from the literature that closing schools reduces per-pupil costs very little, if at all. Thus, it appears that the strategy of closing schools to save money is largely symbolic. As noted

> itably become more heavily populated, more of the students are less needed; they become superfluous, redundant.
>
> What size should a school be? The data of this research and our own educational values tell us that a school should be sufficiently small that all of its students are needed for its enterprises. A school should be small enough that students are not redundant. (p. 202)

The policy implication stemming from research on the school size issue appears clear. Since size is a fairly manipulative variable, "Educational policymakers do have some control over the size of schools, especially in a time of declining enrollment."[13]

Cost Savings Issue

The ostensible driving force for most school closures is that of cost savings, meaning the favoring of approaches that minimize financial loss.[14] This mind-set has led educators and the public to focus on drastic measures to cut costs, particularly the closing of schools.[15] One reason that underutilized or near-empty schools have become the prime targets of cost-cutting strategies is that they are highly visible. After all, can one slight the public's reaction and right to question "Why should half-empty schools remain open when schooling costs are soaring?" No, there is nothing wrong with raising the issue. What is questionable, however, is the assumption that closing schools will result in huge financial savings. On the contrary, "The anticipated cost savings of school closings are often exaggerated."[16] School closures in most cases mean only slight savings because 75-85% of a school budget is for personnel costs, which are usually only slightly affected, if at all, by closures.[17] Furthermore, in many cases additional costs may arise (e.g., transportation of displaced students; maintenance, insurance, security for closed building).

in one study, ". . . the savings for the taxpayer is psychological only."[20] From a policy perspective, it appears appropriate to ask, "Why waste time, money, and community goodwill on a task that will not reap overriding financial rewards?"[21] Generally, closures may not be worth the added costs to parents of additional student time and parental costs in transportation to the receiving schools. Further, it might not be worth the loss in educational benefits emanating from small school size.

Equity Issue[22]

A cold fact of life regarding retrenchment policy-making is that conflict-management decisions tend to result in clear winners and losers.[23] On this point, a major conclusion of school closure research by Boyd and Wheaton (1983) is:

> The politics of school closings is more a "divide and conquer" than a "plan and agree" process. The secret of school closings, sensed by some school officials, is concentrated cuts judiciously targeted to minimize the likelihood of the formation of resistant coalitions. There always will be opposition to school closings, but if it is isolated it will have little effect. Because citizens in other neighborhoods do not mind seeing someone else's ox get gored, they will be unlikely to join forces with the losers unless they believe their neighborhood schools will be in jeopardy. (p. 31)

In urban, multi-ethnic, socioeconomically diverse segregated school districts (which characterize most of the nation's large urban centers), school closures raise critical issues of educational equity. Based on a small number of case studies, there is ample evidence that economically advantaged white students and their parents have been the clear winners while minority and working-class students and their parents have been the clear losers as a result of closure decisions. Investigations of school closures in Nashville (Berger, 1983; Scott, 1983), New York (Dean, 1983), Phoenix (Valencia, 1984),

Santa Barbara (Valencia, 1980, in press), and St. Louis (Colton & Frelich, 1979) have reported that schools with primarily low socioeconomic status and minority students have suffered the brunt, if not the exclusive burden,' of closings. In these cities, poor minority schools have been disproportionately closed while more affluent white schools have been disproportionately left open. Valencia (1980, 1984) contends that forcing poor minority schools to close predisposes the students to serious academic and psychological adjustment problems and compounds their already high probability of school problems and failure.

Given the nature and structure of education in the United States, it should not be at all surprising that the residents of working-class and minority neighborhoods have been forced to carry the disproportionate or exclusive burdens resulting from the transition of students from closed to receiving schools.[24] Valencia (1980) has noted that based on historical educational inequities and the racial and class stratification characteristic of U.S. society, it can be predicted that working-class minority schools will be forced to carry the exclusive, or near exclusive, burden of school closures. This prediction is based on several premises. First, there are conscious efforts on the part of school boards to prevent white students from fleeing the public schools into private schools or other public school systems, an option which is not available to poor families. Second, the class orientation of white, middle and upper-middle class dominated school boards is more sympathetic to the white constituency than to the ethnic minority constituency. Third, there is the desegregation argument and strategy. Many educators and school board members believe that school closures in segregated districts contribute to breaking down racial isolation and see desegregation

under such circumstances as a desirable goal. There are several possible strategies for implementing desegregation in closure cases. One can desegregate by closing white schools and busing the students to minority schools, or closing minority schools and busing the students to white schools, or a plan combining these two strategies. In reality, the more frequently implemented plan is the closing of minority schools and the one-way busing of minority students to white schools. This procedure places the exclusive burden on minority students, however, and raises equity concerns. This issue has been of such magnitude that minority plaintiffs have filed racial discrimination lawsuits in Nashville (Scott, 1983), Phoenix (Valencia, 1984), and Santa Barbara (Valencia, 1980).

Valencia (1980) has described the singling out and closing of poor minority schools as a "new form of denial" to equal educational opportunity, the point being that a new form of denial to education now exists that was not there previously. On top of traditional forms of denial (e.g., inequalities in school financing, unfavorable teachers' attitudes, cultural exclusion), a new method has surfaced--the elimination of neighborhood schools for minorities.[25]

Is there empirical evidence that the closure of minority schools in segregated districts and the subsequent transition constitute obstacles to equal educational opportunity? The literature on this question is very sparse.[26] There is one report, however, stemming from a Phoenix, Arizona school closure court case that sheds light on the equity issue. In the 1982 Castro case (Valencia, 1984), Black and Chicano parents and students brought suit against the Phoenix Union High School District, charging racial discrimination in that their school was unfairly selected for closure. The plaintiffs

charged that their school (Phoenix Union, a 94% minority inner-city high school) was being singled out for closing (as well as two other predominantly minority high schools) while none of the district's six white schools were selected for closure. As a result of the three minority school closures, a 30-square-mile area of the inner city contained no high school to serve the predominantly minority population.

After a lengthy hearing for injunctive relief, a Federal Court judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, concluding that the closing of Phoenix Union was discriminatory and had a negative impact upon the plaintiffs' rights to an equal educational opportunity. Phoenix Union was not to be closed. The present author, who served as the expert witness for the plaintiffs, presented extensive testimony with respect to potential impact on the displaced minority students.[27] The author drew from several theoretical and empirical bases in the psychological and educational literature in order to illuminate the issue of alleged adverse impact.[28] The major conclusion of the author's testimony was that the closure of Phoenix Union ". . . would generally create serious psychological and educational consequences for the students"[29] and

. . . their opportunities for equality in education would be severely thwarted."[30]

The ruling in favor of the plaintiffs in the Castro case could signal a critical development toward the identification, analysis, and resolution of the equity issue. First, there is the legal implication. The finding in the Castro case regarding burden is very important for the advancement of school closure case law because: (a) the notion of burden became operationalized (e.g., increased distance from home to school would negatively impact the extracurricular activity participation of minority students); (b) such burden

would result in constitutional violation of students' rights for equal educational opportunity; (c) the judge specifically linked the issues of exclusiveness of burden and significant negative impact with the issue of budgetary problems.

Regarding this connection, the court found:

> The students, parents and public expect and have a right to expect that the administration of the schools of this city will be done fairly, without discrimination or undue adverse impact to any particular segment of the student population. The law requires nothing less. The School Board is not permitted to solve its budgetary problems by acts which result in undue burdens being placed exclusively on minorities, and excluding the majority students from like burdens.[31]

In reference to the judge's ruling on the burden notion, and school closures in racially segregated school districts, Valencia (1984) admonishes that the policy implication for equal educational opportunity one could draw from the finding in Castro is clear: In the management of declining school systems, the burden and sacrifice had better be shared. Legally anything else is unacceptable.

Second, there is the equal educational opportunity policy consideration with respect to the schooling process itself. Resultant of the Castro decision, Valencia (1984) advises that it would behoove policy makers to be aware of the potentially serious disruptions closures create for high risk minorities. This contention should be considered in developing policy and management guidelines before closure decisions.

In conclusion, the available evidence surrounding the equity issue and school closures strongly suggests that retrenchment policies in segregated districts are not "color blind" nor are they free of class inequities. On the contrary, there is convincing documentation from several case studies of

multi-ethnic communities and from a landmark court decision that school districts do not proceed fairly in their closure decision making. Furthermore, by all indications, such decisions exacerbate the already difficult conditions minority students face in their efforts to achieve a semblance of equal educational opportunity.

Public Support Issue

For two main reasons, there is a connection between school closures and a potential decrease in community support for public schools. First, neighborhood schools are nearby. They are convenient for students and parents. Second, there is a political cohesion of local groups around their schools. Thus, it is not surprising that the school closure literature is full of reports in which parents have become quite annoyed when their schools were closed. The important question, however, is this: What are parents' options in expressing their dissatisfaction and to what degree will these undermine the public schools? The evidence is skimpy on this issue, but the existing literature reports that school closings lead to community protest over closures (before, during, and after) and such protest often results in varying expressions and messages that support for public education will no longer be forthcoming.[32]

Two of the gravest opposition tactics parents can use and have used in closure situations are: (a) the voting down of school levys, and (b) the transfer of their children from the public schools into private schools. These two forms of diminished lack of support for public education are particularly distressful to school districts because they undermine finances at a time of financial stringencies. For example, in a comprehensive investigation

of the neighborhood impact of school closures in Seattle, it was found that voting patterns on a school levy differed significantly between neighborhoods that had and had not experienced school closures. In those neighborhoods that had not undergone closings, 81.4% of the voters voted yes on the last school levy, while 68.3% of the voters voted yes in the neighborhoods whose schools had been closed.[33] In further regression analysis, however, results showed most of the variance was accounted for by race, sex and age, thus indicating that community opposition to closures is highly complex.

The issue of parents pulling out their children from public schools and enrolling them in private schools has caused great alarm for public education.[34] Although the exodus is part of a wider pattern of parental dissatisfaction with the public schools,[35] closures or planned closures in some cases have precipitated the transfers. There are scattered reports that this is occurring. For example, in Wellesley, Massachusetts the bitter debates over planned and actual school closings in the 1970s frustrated some parents to the point that they withdrew their children and turned toward private schooling.[36]

There is also some evidence that school districts have taken the offensive in closure situations to prevent students from fleeing to private schools. A case in point was in Santa Barbara, California in 1979. Of the 11 elementary schools in this district (five predominantly white schools, five predominantly Chicano, and one ethnically balanced), three Chicano schools were closed. The district was explicit in its criteria for closure proposal as to why no white schools were closed. When referring to one of the white schools, the district proposal noted:

> The school's residential area is the highest socioeconomic area in the city. Maintaining this area as a predominantly public school attendance area is important to the District. Unless the District can at-

> tract and hold these upper middle class areas, the entire Elementary School District is in danger of becoming more progressively ethnically and socioeconomically segregated.[37]

In short, the school district in Santa Barbara protected itself from receiving this threat from the white schools: "If you close our schools, we will move out and you will lose even more money because of additional decline in enrollment."

Another related aspect of the public support issue involves the potential negative impact school closures have on decreased parental involvement in their children's schooling when their children enroll in receiving schools, which can be interpreted as a form of diminished support for schools. Valencia (in press) did a follow-up study of the minority school closures in Santa Barbara. His results indicated that parental involvement across 10 different activity categories (e.g., participating in Parent Teacher Association, parent-teacher conferences, school board meetings, field trips) was higher in frequency in the pre-closure schools compared to the receiving schools. Across the 10 categories, there was a 29% decline in participation frequency.[38] The majority of the reasons parents gave for higher involvement levels at the pre-closure schools clustered around a "community" dimension (e.g., cultural activities, distance from home to school, sense of neighborhood.)[39]

In summary, it appears that the available evidence pertinent to the public support issue raises a serious policy implication. The widespread dissatisfaction with schooling, erosion of support for public schools, and mistrust in school officials are, in some cases, exacerbated by school closures. Therefore, the social costs of closings should be weighted heavily in closure decision-making regarding closures. If parents reduce their political support for public schools and send their children to private schools in response to

closures of a local school, any projected savings from closure may be illusory.

Conclusions

This brief review of school closures and policy issues permits a major conclusion. The limited research on the four closure aspects discussed in the paper provides little evidence and little sense that school closings are always in the best interests of school officials, teachers, parents, and students. On the contrary, school closures may be highly counterproductive in creating more harm than good. It would behoove school officials to consider the issues raised here of school size, cost savings, equity, and public support in the development of policy prior to closings.

It appears that school officials and policy makers have been asking the wrong question during the era of retrenchment. As Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983) point out:

> The dilemma of decline is not whether, or even how, to close a school, but rather how to finance the educational mission of the school district. (p. 493)

To resolve this dilemma, school districts must hurdle the two barriers of fuzzy educational mission and negative mind-sets toward decline. Districts must have clear, shared missions and have positive, visionary attitudes toward change.[40] What alternatives to closing schools are there? How can the educational mission be financed? A number of proposals and actual implementations have been offered. These ideas include the concept of decentralized mini-schools, various forms of shared space/lease arrangements with community and business interests, innovative new educational programs, and partnerships with business and industry.[41] For example, in St. Louis Park (Minnesota), the local

school district is earning nearly $30,000 monthly income from rentals of empty school space. In Maryland, a school district produced an annual profit of $350,000 in 1981 in a leasing program.[42] By thinking creatively, opportunity can be found in the adversity of decline. Thinking optimistically, "We can use this decline to improve both the quality of public schooling and the quality of life in the larger community."[43]

On a final point, it should be noted that a "baby boomlet" will be cresting in our elementary schools during the 1980s in many states. For example, it is predicted that California public schools will enroll an additional 309,000 elementary students by 1987-88 and another 556,000 by 1992-93, requiring 1,200 new schools by 1992.[44] In contrast, the high school enrollment will continue to decline nationally, but by the beginning of the next decade enrollment is projected to shift upward.[45] In short, "If school officials are thinking ahead to the Nineties, they will retain schools and school land today."[46]

Footnotes

1. Boyd (1982, p. 231). Also see: Abramowitz and Rosenfield (1978).

2. Boyd (1982, p. 232). The widespread public resistance to invest further money in education is best exemplified by the tax limitation movement (e.g., Proposition 13 in California) that swept the nation in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

3. Levine (1979) as cited in Boyd (1982, p. 232).

4. Boyd and Wheaton (1983).

5. Scott (1983, p. 235); also see Stinchcombe (1984, p. 1).

6. The most comprehensive review of the literature on declining enrollments is by Zerchykov (1982). Of the 250 studies reviewed, 57 deal with school closures.

7. Although the existing literature is mainly prescriptive in nature, recent scholarship has become more theoretical and empirical. See, for example, the entire volumes of Education and Urban Society (1983, 15) and Peabody Journal of Education (1983, 60), which are devoted to current knowledge on enrollment declines and retrenchment management.

8. Zerchykov (1982, p. viii).

9. As far as the author knows, except in scattered cases there are no general data available indicating the actual percentage increases in receiving schools resulting from the influx of students from closed schools. This issue is raised since the percentage of actual increase is a key variable in hypothesizing whether closure transitions generally create disturbances for students. See Valencia (1984) for further discussion of this concern. Also

see footnote no. 24.

10. Fox (1981, p. 273).

11. The "bigger is better" notion is largely characteristic of the views of school administrators and education officials (Glass et al., 1982, p. 24, pp. 83-84). On the other hand, there is a well-established belief among teachers that "smaller is better" (Cahen et al., 1983, p. 3). These two diametrically opposed notions testify to the political nature of the size issue.

12. See, for example: Chambers (1981), Coleman (1974), Coleman et al. (1966), Goodlad (1984), Gump (1978), Guthrie (1979), Levin (1983), Murnane (1975), National Institute of Education (1978), Sher and Tompkins (1977), and Summers and Wolfe (1977). For empirical studies suggesting a negative relation between achievement and enrollments, see those studies cited by Chambers (1981).

13. Lindsay (1982, p. 64).

14. Hickey (1982) cited in Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, p. 492).

15. Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, p. 492).

16. Levin (1983, p. 2).

17. Levin (1983, p. 2); Stinchcombe (1984, p. 271).

18. Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, p. 494).

19. Weatherley, Narver and Elmore (1983, p. 18).

20. Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, p. 495).

21. Ibid., p. 492.

22. The present analysis on educational equity deals with the potential

adverse impact on schooling of minority students. Another similar area of concern, which is not covered here, involves the negative impact (i.e., disproportionate layoffs) on minority teachers as a result of retrenchment (see Rosenberg & Vincent, 1978, in Abramowitz & Rosenfield, 1978).

23. Boyd and Wheaton (1983, p. 30)

24. The notion of transition is key in understanding how student displacement brought about by closures creates burdens and predisposes students, especially high-risk ones, to heightened vulnerability to psychological disturbance and academic problems. See Valencia (1984, pp. 51-52).

25. High density minority schools are far from perfect. Having schools nearby one's residence, nevertheless, makes it considerably easier for minority parents to become involved in their children's education, is convenient for students to attend, and has the potential for creating a sense of community-school bond. The argument here is that the total eradication of schools in minority neighborhoods tends to wipe out the limited gains minorities have made in equalizing education since the Civil Rights Movement.

26. Although there are several studies reporting the sole or disproportionate closures of minority schools in multi-ethnic communities, only one study (Valencia, in press) was located that attempted to gather quantifiable data on closure impact on minorities.

27. The conceptual framework on discriminatory intent and impact which the author developed for his court testimony is detailed in Valencia (1984).

28. These bases were normative-, desegregation- and school closure-related research as they pertain to the notion of transition.

29. Valencia (1984, p. vi).

30. Ibid., p. 92.

31. Ibid., p. 100.

32. Berger (1983) studied community protest against school closings in 65 school districts across the country. He identified a number of opposition tactics: letters to school board members, petitions to board, heated exchanges with board, personal attacks on board in media, demonstrations, board member replacement at next election, lawsuits, and voting down referenda and/or budgets.

33. Mathematica Policy Research and Seattle Public Schools (1976).

34. Although enrollment is down in the private school sector--as it is in the public schools--this aggregated trend is misleading. The decline in the private sector is coming from Catholic schools (which comprise three-fourths of the private schools). On the other hand, the one-fourth private, non-Catholic sector is increasing in enrollment. See Abramowitz (1980).

35. Two of the major reasons parents are dissatisfied with public schools are that they perceive the schools as suffering from both lax discipline and low academic standards. See, for example, Bourgoin (1982), Bumstead (1982), and Kidder (1982).

36. Bumstead (1982, p. 41).

37. Valencia (1980, p. 10).

38. Valencia (in press, p. 36).

39. Ibid., p. 14.

40. Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, p. 493).

41. See, for example, Goodlad (1984, p. 310), Levin (1983, p. 2), and

Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, pp. 495-496).

42. Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, p. 493).

43. Ibid., p. 496.

44. Fallon (1984).

45. Valencia (1984, p.3)

46. Shakeshaft and Gardner (1983, p. 493).

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